

Message Text

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

JOINT CINCUNC/EMBASSY MESSAGE

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR KS KN

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF PRESIDENT PARK ON NORTHWEST ISLANDS, DEFENSE
OF SEOUL AND I CORPS (US/ROK) GROUP

1. ON APRIL 22, PRESIDENT PARK SPENT NEARLY FOUR HOURS
AT HEADQUARTERS I CORPS (ROK/US). HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY
THE MND, CJCS, AND ROK ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF. PURPOSE
OF VISIT WAS TO BE UPDATED ON OPERATIONAL READINESS OF
FORCES DEFENDING WESTERN CORRIDOR. GENERAL HOLLINGSWORTH
GAVE EXCELLENT BRIEFING; SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION RANGED TO
BROADER ISSUES AND CONTINUED THROUGH LUNCH HOUR.

2. HOLLINGSWORTH PRESENTED, IN SOME DETAIL, PLANS
FOR IMPLEMENTING FORWARD DEFENSE CONCEPT WHICH
CINCUNC HAD OUTLINED AT SECURITY CONSULTATIVE MEETING
LAST SEPTEMBER. AS IS KNOWN, OVERRIDING AIM
OF THAT CONCEPT IS TO BLUNT AND STOP ANY ATTACK BEFORE
IT HAS PROGRESSED TO POINT OF ENDANGERING SEOUL.

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PRESIDENT WAS THOROUGHLY IMPRESSED BY BOTH CONCEPT AND
PLANS/PREPARATIONS TO IMPLEMENT IT. HE TOOK SPECIFIC
NOTE OF A NUMBER OF LOGISTICAL AND OPERATIONAL
SHORTCOMINGS WHICH MERITED ATTENTION AND ENGAGED HIS

GOVERNMENT TO DO ALL FEASIBLE TO CORRECT THEM WITH DISPATCH. THEREAFTER, HE TOUCHED ON THREE SUBJECTS PERTINENT TO THE DEFENSE OF ROK.

3. NORTHWEST ISLANDS:

A. THE PRESIDENT STARTED BY STATING THAT HOLLINGSWORTH'S BRIEFING MADE HIM CONFIDENT ABOUT MILITARY POSTURE IN WESTERN TERRITORY AND CAPABILITY TO DEFEND SEOUL. HOWEVER, HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT CAPACITY TO DEAL WITH NORTH KOREAN SURPRISE ATTACK ON ONE OR MORE OF NORTHWEST ISLANDS. ADDRESSING CINCUNC, HE POSED SPECIFIC QUESTION: WHAT WOULD YOUR REACTION BE?

B. CINCUNC REPLIED THAT HE HAD ALREADY IDENTIFIED AT LEAST TWENTY DIFFERENT NORTH KOREAN OPTIONS FOR THREATENING ISLANDS OR ACCESS THERETO. THESE RAN GAMUT FROM MINOR HARRASSMENT TO AMPHIBIOUS/AIRBORNE ATTACK; EACH SUGGESTED A DIFFERENT RESPONSE. CINCUNC GAVE PERSONAL ESTIMATE THAT ANY NORTH KOREAN INITIATIVES WOULD LIKELY START AT THE LOWER END OF THE SCALE - AS, FOR EXAMPLE, REPEAT OF 24 MARCH PENETRATIONS INTO AIR SPACE WEST OF INCHON. IN THIS CONNECTION, CINCUNC NOTED THAT AS SOON AS ROK F-4'S WERE ALOFT AND SAM RADARS LOCKED ON, THE NORTH KOREA AIRCRAFT WENT HOME.

C. PRESIDENT SAID HE WELL UNDERSTOOD IMPORTANCE OF NON-ESCLATORY RESPONSE. TYPE OF SITUATION THAT CINCUNC POSTULATED WAS ONE THING. HOWEVER, AN ACTUAL ATTACK AGAINST ONE OR MORE OF THE ISLANDS WAS QUITE ANOTHER, GIVEN THEIR REMOTENESS AND CONSEQUENT DIFFICULTIES OF RESUPPLY AND REENFORCEMENT.

D. CINCUNC STATED THAT, THANKS TO PRUDENT AND EFFECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN BY ROK ARMED FORCES TO STRENGTHEN GARRISONS AND WEAPONRY, FORCES ON ISLANDS HAD A GOOD DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY, FOR THE SHORT TERM. THUS, THERE
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WOULD BE TIME FOR ASSESSMENT AND DECISION MAKING AT GOVERNMENT LEVEL.

E. PRESIDENT SAID THAT BOTH THE CIVILIAN POPULACE OF ISLANDS, AND THEIR GARRISONS HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED AND MOTIVATED FOR DETERMINED DEFENSE. SHELTERS HAVE BEEN DUG FOR EVERYONE AND POPULACE IS PREPARED TO GO UNDERGROUND AND ACCEPT FRIENDLY AIR STRIKES DIRECTLY ON THE ISLAND, IF THIS IS NECESSARY TO REPEL ENEMY. PEOPLE OF ISLANDS ARE ROK CITIZENS AND THE ISLANDS ARE ROK TERRITORY. IF ENEMY TAKES ANY INCY OF OUR TERRITORY, WE WILL NOT CONFORM TO THE COMMUNIST SCENARIO OF NEGOTIATING

THE MATTER AT PANMUNJOM. WE WILL RE-TAKE WHAT WE LOST AND RESTORE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. CINCUNC PLANNING MUST TAKE THIS INTO ACCOUNT.

F. CINCUNC SAID, IN PRINCIPLE, EVERY PYONG OF THE ROK TERRITORY WAS EQUALLY SACRED. HOWEVER, IF NORTH KOREA WERE DETERMINED TO MASS AIR, NAVAL AND GROUND ELEMENTS TO PRESS A MAJOR ATTACK AGAINST THE NORTHERN THREE ISLANDS, FORCE RATIOS WOULD BE DISTINCTLY ADVERSE. CONFRONTED WITH SUCH AN EQUATION, THE DECISION AMONG SEVERAL COURSES OF ACTIONS COULD NOT BE LEFT SOLELY TO THE FIELD COMMANDER. NATURE AND LOCALE OF RESPONSE WAS PROPERLY A MATTER FOR CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING AT GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT LEVEL.

4. DEFENSE OF SEOUL:

A. PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE WAS DEEPLY PREOCCUPIED BY DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND POTENTIAL IMPACT THEREOF ON KOREAN PENINSULA. WHILE DIFFICULT TO PREDICT EXACT ATTITUDE OF NORTH KOREAN REGIME, COMMUNIST SUCCESSES IN INDO-CHINA AND KIM IL SUNGS'S VISIT TO PEKING SUGGEST THAT THERE IS A HIGH POSSIBILITY THAT NORTH KOREA WILL UNDERTAKE ANOTHER ARMED PROVOCATION. IT IS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL THAT PRESIDENT RALLY HIS PEOPLE. PRESERVATION OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY IS VITAL TO A NATION'S SPIRIT AND TRANSLATES INTO DETERMINATION NOT TO YIELD A SINGLE INCH OF LAND.

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B. PRESIDENT CONTINUED THAT CURRENT DEFENSE PLANS FOR SEOUL PROVIDE FOR MAJOR EVACUATION OF POPULATION AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO AREAS SOUTH OF THE HAN RIVER. HOWEVER, HE WAS DIRECTING A CHANGE IN THAT POLICY. "THE GOVERNMENT AND 6.5 MILLION PEOPLE WILL REMAIN IN SEOUL AND FIGHT TO THE LAST MAN". AS WE HAVE JUST LEARNED FROM VIETNAM, MASSIVE EVACUATION OF CIVIL POPULACE MEANS DISASTER; WE DON'T WANT A REPETITION OF DA NANG. IF WE WITHDRAW FROM SEOUL, THERE WILL STILL BE GREAT CONFUSION AND LOWERED MORALE OF SOLDIERS AT THE FRONT. CONVERSELY, KNOWING THAT THE PEOPLE ARE REMAINING IN SEOUL, NO SOLDIER WILL TAKE A BACKWARD STEP AND THE CIVIL POPULACE WILL TAKE HEART FROM THE ASSURANCE THAT FRONT LINE IS STABLE.

C. PRESIDENT SAID HE INTENDS TO MAKE THIS DECISION PUBLIC IN VERY NEAR FUTURE. CONCOMITANTLY, HE WILL EXHORT CITIZENS OF SEOUL TO PREPARE SHELTERS/BUNKERS THROUGHOUT CITY FOR PROTECTION AGAINST AIR OR GUERRILLA ATTACK. HE AGREED WITH STILWELL/HOLLINGSWORTH CONCEPT THAT FIRST BATTLE WOULD BE DECISIVE; AND THE

KEY IN THE EARLY DAYS WAS MAINTENANCE OF CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT AT ALL ECHELONS. ONLY WHEN SITUATION WAS CLARIFIED AND STABILIZED COULD ONE THINK OF ORDERLY AND SELECTIVE EVACUATION OF NON-CONBATANT PERSONNEL.

TENURE OF I CORPS (ROK/US) GROUP

A. THE PRESIDENT STATED THAT HE WAS AWARE OF PLANS FOR DEACTIVATION OF THE I CORPS GROUP LATER THIS YEAR. HE SAID HE CONSIDERED THAT TO BE A VERY UNWISE MOVE.

B. CINCUNC SAID THAT, AS HE HAD REPORTED TO MND, THE TIMING OF THE DEACTIVATION OF THE I CORPS GROUP WAS BEING RECONSIDERED IN WASHINGTON, AND THAT VIEWS OF PRESIDENT PARK WERE PERTINENT TO THIS RECONSIDERATION.

C. THE PRESIDENT SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED THAT HIS VIEWS BE REPORTED. IT WAS HIS FIRM OPINION
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THAT, GIVEN THE EXTREMELY VOLATILE SITUATION IN ASIA, DEACTIVATION OF THE I CORPS GROUP WOULD BE A SIGNAL FOR ENCOURAGING KIM IL SUNG. CONSEQUENTLY, PRESIDENT FELT THAT TENURE OF I CORPS GROUP SHOULD BE EXTENDED UNTIL AT LEAST NEXT YEAR.
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